

SENATE BILL REPORT

HJM 4018

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Agriculture, April 3, 2003

Brief Description: Requesting Congress to enter trade agreements that are more fair to domestic agricultural businesses.

Sponsors: Representatives Blake, Veloria and Kenney.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Agriculture: 3/27/03, 4/3/03 [DPA].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

Majority Report: Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators Swecker, Chair; Brandland, Vice Chair; Rasmussen and Sheahan.

Staff: Evan Sheffels (786-7486)

Background: There are an estimated 185,000 acres devoted to commercial apple production in Washington. There are more than 3,800 growers registered with the Washington Apple Commission. In 1999, 123 million 42-pound boxes of apples were produced in Washington. All Washington apples are hand-picked. The estimated value of the state's apples for fresh consumption was \$774 million and \$75.6 million for processed apples in 1999. Thirty percent of Washington's crop is sold overseas each year. The top 10 export markets for 1999-2000 were: Mexico, Taiwan, Canada, Indonesia, Hong Kong, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, the United Kingdom, Venezuela and Dubai.

Summary of Amended Bill: The joint memorial communicates to President George W. Bush, the President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, and each member of Congress from Washington, the state Legislature's desire to see trade agreements developed that provide a level playing field for the state's farmers and orchardists.

Amended Bill Compared to Original Bill: References to safety and health requirements and food quality standards were removed from the memorial and other provisions were clarified.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Testimony For: The Washington apple industry is facing difficult times. Although it produces a high quality product, it is getting more difficult to export apples because of trade barriers in other countries. Also, many overseas apple growers receive government support, whereas the apple industry in the United States has been almost completely self-sufficient. Negotiations continue on a number of trade fronts; however, it often seems that agriculture

does not receive priority consideration and is therefore the subject of concessions. This makes the playing field uneven. The goal of this memorial is to have the government negotiate fair trade agreements. The correction of some of the statements in the memorial would improve the measure.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Jim Halstrom, Washington State Horticultural Association (pro).